THE SHAKSPEARE CLOSET

By Wm.Hy.Ireland, Copied from the Oracle Newspaper,1799.

No. 1.

The Confessions of Masterre Samuelle William Henerye Irelande.

In the true and genuine confession of all my ingenious

Shakspeare Closet
2nd Copy

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[illegible] better and the purpose of imposition.

My Father I have said was a curious Man - He has a taste for painted Glass,and curious Prints and old Pictures;and valuable manuscripts and old Books.

His Closet therefore was curious - You approached it by an anti-room of genuine Hogarth's;and when the mind has once taken an antiquarian bent,it is as yielding, my friend Talbot tells me,as a good Toledo - it may bend hilt to point in the circumference of a peck.

*This alludes to W(1)H. I's 'Authentic Account' 1796
His "Confessions not being published until 1805

Slide	negative		Prints to be
x	x		Francis Grose
			J. H. Mortimer
x	x		John Dennis
x	x		Portchester Cas
x	x		Duke of Clare
x	x		Beaumont Ho
x	x		~~New Inn~~
			Old Chest

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No. 1.

The Confessions of Masterre Samuelle William Henerye Irelande.

In the true and genuine confession of all my ingenious forgeries*; I have stated the Vanity which assailed me in the Closet of my Fatherre. I beg pardon for my orthography; ut really I have used so many Superfluous Letters in the MSS. that the modern system has gone out of my mind, and besides the Universities where I studded did not make spelling any part of my education - I have forgetten it, or never knew it correctly - which it was I cannot remember now.

As everything from a genius, such as I now find mine to be must last, I will describe the Closet where my water-marks, and my writings were shown to our Visitors. I must do the place the justice to say that no one could better aid the purpose of imposition.

My Father I have said was a curious Man - He has a taste for painted Glass, and curious Prints and old Pictures; and valuable manuscripts and old Books.

His Closet therefore was curious - You approached it by an anti-room of genuine Hogarth's; and when the mind has once taken an antiquarian bent, it is as yielding, my friend Talbot tells me, as a good Toledo - it may bend hilt to point in the circumference of a peck.

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Closet

The circumference of the Closet is not great - 'w
!Narrow is the Path that leads'as Dr. Joseph Warton
often said.

Into this Closet had been taken all the Prints and Drawings analogous to Shakspeare (I find in my Pamphlet I spelt his name without the 'e' at the end, which as in the forgeries I gave him so plentifully, his name may very well bear. Spear is spear as well as spere or speare, as Mr. Chalmers has proved.

How I came to forget my own work and write it in the said Pamphlet, as no other creature ever did from the creation of the World, I know not - but in my Confessions I have spelt it SHAKSPEAR

But to the Prints - We had Dreeshout's head, and Marshall's head and my head, we had the Courting Chair, which my Father found; when he courted Jane (?) Hatherrwaye, and a brownner bit of Chestnut or Oak never ceeped in the amorous parts of a Poet - I have frequently sat in it myself, so there needs no more proof.

In my Pamphlet I have mohtioned the many circumstances conducing to my forgeries. Never let any Genius after me think of a profession.

If my Father had not been a Weaver, I had never unravelled the old Tapestry to tie up the MSS. If I had not been a Clerk to a Lawyer, I had never learned cramp hands, nor forged the Deed of Gift - If I had not known the

The circumstances of the Cloak is not great - 'Tarrow' is the Path that leads's Dr.Joseph Warren often said.

Into this Cloak and been taken all the Prints and Drawings analogous to Shakspeare (I find in my Pamphlet I spoit his name without the 'a' at the end,which as in the forgeries I gave him so plausibly,his name may very well been. Spam is spam as well as spare or sparse,as Mr.Chalmers has proved.

How I came to forget my own work and write it in the said Pamphlet,as no other creature ever did from the creation of the World,I know not - but in my Confessions I have spoit it

SHAKSPEAR

But to the Tribute - We had Proscenium's road,and Marshall's road and my road,we had the Counting House,which my Father found;when he counted less (?) Hathorrows,and a drunken bit of Chaskut or Oak never cropped in the enormous pelts of a Poet - I have frequently met in it myself,so there needs no more proof.

In my Pamphlet I have mentioned the many circumstances connecting to my forgeries. Never let any Counting office me think of a profession.

If my Father had not been a Weaver,I had never curvo-volled the old Tapestry to the up-two Mss. If I had not been a Clerk to a Lawyer,I had never learned enough Latin, nor forged the Deed of Gift - If I had not known the

Bookbinder's Marbler, I should not have found ~~fof~~ foxy ink. If my Father had not been a Man of taste, I could never have imposed upon him.

In my next number, I shall enter myself the Closet of Shakspear – in my Doveyring I shall exhibit the manner of reading the MSS., the magnifying glass, the Drawers which held the Deeds, and the manner and expression of all the Visitors to whom they were shown – and I will also print the Letters, which credulity dictated. S. W. H. Ireland.

No. 11. on Saturday next

No. 11.

Here I shall attempt the proper mode of spelling

In the first number of these Confessions, I stated the Record I intended to leave Eternity of these Transactions. As the basis on which I build is that of truth only, I must decline my aid from Fancy and Fiction. I proceed therefore to record the manner in which the MSS. were shown to the Curious. I must pay the tribute of filial admiration – Never was there a Wonder with a better Showman, The Black CAT of Katerfelto, or Graham's Giants; the Vergers who show the Tomos of Westminster (see my fine fragment of William the Conquerer) the lop Ear of General Monk, or the Cicerone of the horse Armoury – all shrink into nothing before my Showman.

After the solemn expectation of an hour in an outer

Boatsinger's Harbor, I should not have found ~~the~~ Foxy Jack.

If my Father had not been a Man of taste, I could never have imposed upon him.

In my next number, I shall enter myself the Closet of Shakspeare - in my Dovewing I shall exhibit the manner of reading the MSS., the magnifying glass, the Drawers which hold the Deeds, and the manner and expressions of all the Visitors to whom they were shown - and I will also point the lodgers, which occasioned disturbs. S. N. Island.

No. II. on Saturday next

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After the solemn ceremonies of an hour in an outer

. Apartment, each Man "knawing no his lanky Fingers," with the tremours of anxious delight, the Showman himself appeared - his countenance bright with triumph, sparkling with joy, and even the Kitten purring applause upon the Hearth, among the Lares of the House, where Shakspear's remains were sheltered.

"A present Deity they shout around !
A present Deity the Walls resound."

The Showman usually prefaced his remarks by a cautious enquiry of the name of the newly-found Proselyte, a step he had been compelled to take by the unjust and ungentlemanly conduct of the Commentators. They had, it appeared, unseen, refused to believe in the new Shakspear.

They had set at work every Engine to vilify his Immortal Treasures, and injure his property - and Mr. Malone had gone so far as to desire to try their authenticity in another House. It was for this reason that he had resolved to afford every other Man of Science and Literature an opportunity to behold the devine Relics, except the said Mr. Malone, but this is not all.

"Needuni etian causa irrarum
Saeriqual dolores
Excideranf animo "

(A passage I was once flogged at St Omers for not being able to construe.)

That Gentleman, it appears had a Head, brought from the Stratford Monument en masque (as I used to say in France).

Apartment, seen Van "Leaving on his Lonely Pilgrim,"

with the treasure of earthes delight, the Shoyman

himself appeared - his countenance bright with

triumph, sparkling with joy, and over the kitten purring

appleasee upon the Hearth, among the lares of the House,

where Shakespeare's romance were shelved.

"A present Deity they shout around !
A present Deity the Vaile rebound."

The Shoyman usually prefaced his remarks by a cautious

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he had been compelled to take by the mutual and regrettable-

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They had set at work every Engine to vilify his

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that he had resolved to afford every other Man of

Science and Literature an opportunity to behold the

divine Relics, except the said Mr. Malone, but this is not

all.

"Nocturnal oblam cancre turnum
Sacrificial dolorse
Hazlewood anime "

(A passage I was once flogged at St Dunns for not being

able to construe.)

Such Gentlemen, it appears had a Hoad, brought from the

Stratford Monument on magpie (as I used to say in

France)

THE SHAKSPEARE HUNT copied from the Oracle Newspaper
(by William Henry Ireland) August 5th. 1799 to Nov. 11th. 1799.

Aid me my Muse, for I would tell of things
Surpassing all that's mortal; of wonders
That were they not fresh in our remembrance,
Might be deemed delusion fiction's Offspring.
Oh ! that my Quill were pluck'd from Fancy's Wing,
[illegible] should I pen my Tale in glowing Phrase.
[illegible]'s Offspring.
[illegible] e record;
[illegible] house,
[illegible] I be found
[illegible] possess
[illegible] ie can boast, ~~Save him who~~
[illegible] He will know
[illegible] Chronicle.
[illegible] fair;
If foul-mouth'd be my story's page should blot,
Let him the Truth proclaim, and stamp me base:
For ever hold me up to public scorn,
That I may bear a Liar's hateful Name.
Against the briny Flood proud Albion's Cliffs
Majestic show their Fronts. In Altitude
Aspiring to the azure-vaulted Roof,
Star fretted. Its sides of Snow-complexion
As the Adamant indisoluble,

Shakspeare Hunt
2nd Copy

THE SHAKSPEARE HUNT copied from the Oracle Newspaper
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Surpassing all that's mortal; of wonders
That were they not fresh in our remembrance,
Might be deemed delusion fiction's Offspring.
Oh ! that my Quill were pluck'd from Fancy's Wing,
Then should I pen my Tale in glowing Phrase.
For such it merits. 'Tis wonder's Offspring,
And Fancy should the wondrous Theme record;
I am but earthly, that must plead excuse,
If lack of Frenzie's Language shall be found
In this my strange Narrative. I possess
Such knowledge of the Fact as none can boast, ~~Save him who~~
Save him who wrought the Action. He will know
If Truth or Falsehood stain my Chronicle.
Be he for ever dumb if I speak fair;
If foul-mouth'd he my story'd Page should blot,
Let him the Truth proclaim, and stamp me base:
For ever hold me up to public scorn,
That I may bear a Liar's hateful Name.
Against the brimy Flood proud Albion's Cliffs
Majestic show their Fronts. In Altitude
Aspiring to the azure-vaulted Roof,
Star fretted. Its sides of Snow-complexion
As the Adamant indisoluble,

Badly withstands the Surges dread attacks,
And fixed immutable defy the shock
Of meaddring Time and warring Elements.
Upon this Isle renoun'd London spreads
Her form magnificent, where Liberty,
Enchanting Goddess, sits enthron'd and smiles
To see her darling Children's happiness,
Hard by the Bank of silvery Thames, where once
A stately Palace of the Norfolk stood,
Enacted was my Theme's reality.
Long was the Mansion fam'd for its Contents.
The Walls with rarest works of Art were grac'd;
Each Chamber boasted some Antiquity,
Vouch'd genuine by Sages of experience,
Yet one in beauty far excell'd the rest,
A Study amply deck'd with choicest works
Of British Authours fam'd, there might be seen
Of Chaucer, Gower, and St. Edmund's Monk
Of Spencer, Shakspeare, and a hundred more
Editions rare. 'Twas there you might behold
The wrought apparel of renowned Sydney,
The bean-strung Tassels of the martyr'd Charles,
And blood'stain'd Cromwell's Coat, the sculpter'd Chair
Where Shakspeare oft have sat, while on his knee
With glowing cheek upon his Heart reclin'd,
The lovely Anna hears his talk of Love .

There your Eye would gaze on Casements lofty
Whose Gothic forms were richly star'd with Glass
Of varied dyes diffusing wide around
The Rainbow Tints,a gleam ecstatical.
Besides its Lord* within this Mansion dwelt
Two Maids,his daughters,and a Matron sage,
The Deal of one to Basis was allied, †
The Pencil grac'd the second's Hand; the third ⊗
Claim'd Kindred with the fire crained God whose thought
In tripping measures flew.Yet one there was
Beneath the Roof,of whom I most would speak,
The last-born of this Family.A Youth, ♁
Of whom Report have spread a thousand Tales
Most to dispraise,Few to commend his Name.

No. 2.

In early Days the converse of his Sire
Was wont to please his Fancy.With delight
He listen'd to the Lays of ancient Times;
Read o'er and o'er old legendary Tales,
And Ballads that recorded valrous Deeds
Of England's Heroes held.At length the fate
Of hapless Chatterton assailed his Ear ;
Oft he ponder'd o'er the unhappy Record,
Yet would have gladly shar'd his luckless end
To be the Partner of his Fame renoun'd.
Thus time elapsed,till the revolving Years

* Samuel Ireland (3) ⊕ Jane Ireland
† Anna Maria Ireland ⊗ Mrs. Anna Maria Freeman
♁ William Henry Ireland

Had eighteen Summers told, 'Twas then the Youth,
With Vanity inspired first dar'd assay
His lofty purpose. Like the unthinking Boy
Whose Hand untutor'd won'd the rein assume
Of Phoebus mettled Coursers. So he strove
To drive the Chariot of our English Sun
And bear his Godlike Name. Th'attempt was bold;
But, like Appolle's Son, he aim'd too high,
And from the lofty Seat was headlong hurled
By Thunders launch'd from direful Critic's Hand.
But, hold ! Now to rehearse the varied Theme
His Strain assay'd, Humbly at first he strove
A Signature to pen. The Cheat prevailed;
For most who saw the Fiction credited,
Fame's Trumpet bair widely spread that won'drous Tale;
'Twas soon the public Converse; naught was heard
But Shakspeare's Name rever'd. Thus accomplish'd
The primal purpose, his prevalent Brain
Attempted next the style to imitate -
When the religious Tenets of our Bard
In meekest Strains appeared. This was received
And by the World admir'd, Our Shakspeare's Note
And the receipt by Hemings penn'd came next
To strike with wonder: For Bills of Promise
A custom had been deemed of modern date:
Yet this was overlook'd, so prone is Man

To credit wonders which he'd fain believe.
A late traditionary next was vouch'd,
The Whimsical Conceit to Cowley sent
The Letter of Elizabeth renoun'd
And various matters of less import, each
At various times, and not in mass produced
Were genuine esteem'd. The alter'd Lear;
The silken-twisted Lock to Anne sent -
Relic inestimable strick wonder
In the Multitude. S me indeed there were
At first Believers, who at sight of this
Shrank back in doubt. Still unappalled the Youth
Boldly dar'd adventure. And Vortigern
At length appear 'd - But more of this anon.
Countless Receipts, and after lapse of time,
The Annals of our Second Henry fam'd,
And peerless? Rosamond still multiplied
Th' adventurous Fabrication.-
Of this enough, 'Tis fit I now rehearse
Th' Opinions vary'd of the numberless
Who saw the Fiction ? - The Mansion's open,
When straight appears the Master of the Hale,
Who rises, and with free and courteous mien,
Each Stranger greets. Then most eloquently
The forged Tale relates; after the which,
Forth from the massive Chest his Treasure drawers

And offers it to public view

TO MORROW OR NEXT DAY,CONTAINING THE OPINIONS RESPECTING
THE [illegible] MSS.. LORD MULGRxVE. COL. PHxPPS.
Mr.Kxmblx.Miss Wxllis,now Mrs.Oxmphxl.

No. 3.

LORD MxLGRxVE. (Mulgrave)

Here's one of courteous mien,a Gentleman
Of noble bearing,whose upright Conduct
Hath ever warded him from Envy's Shaft

I love him,he shows something like to those
O' the olden time. He is not Custom's Slave
Nor doth the Title in him mar the Man,
But soft he comes to view the public Theme;
He loves the same,and therefore is prepared
To credit what he wishes were most true.
His eager transports blind his better Sense,
He sees the fire-scorched Lines,the mould'ring Sheets,
Nor for moment doubts,- Thus to the Chain
Another Link is added,- The Current
'Gins to swell;and th'enthusiastic Crowd
Press forward,- Why o'er let them come ! At best,
Man's Life is a mere Farce;and this but adds
One to the many strangeful Senses.

COL. C. PHxPPS

His breeding,Sir,hath been to Arms.He loves
His God and Country,and he's Liegeman sworn

Unto our Sovreign Lord the King.- 'Tis said
He likes the bustle of a Camp. No ~~Sword~~ Sound
More welcome to's Ear,than the harsh Thunder
Fro the Cannon's belching Mouth. - He's forward
In's Country's Cause,yet when the iron Hand
Of blood-stain'd War is scarf'd in gentle Peace,
'Tis then his Nature changes. He becomes
Docile as the Lamb,and in Beauty's Lap,
Is lulled to sweet repose.-
He's one who yielded to the longing Itch
Of Curiosity
He saw,was plessed, and credited.

MISS Wallis now Mrs. ~~Campbell~~ Campbel.
(Wallis) (Campbel)

Mark ye the lovely Maid.- Lightsome her Step,
As Dew brushing Fairies,or Zephyr's breath,
That scarcely waves the bladed Grass,Her Form
Shows all of Heav'n that e'er did Mortal grace.
The modest Blush plays on her dimpled Cheek,
Like th'expanded Rose waving amidst the Lilies,
Observe her Eye,Like Dian's radiance
Beaming on the snow-deck'd Earth,Her motions
Negligently elegant;her manner
Hath a bewithing something in't that wins
The wond'ring Gazer.Yet these Perfections
Taint not her Mind with Pride.She's mild as Heav'n

.When the early May-morner Sun luminous our Earth
Yet hold! - She gazes on the spurious Bulk;
Now dimpled Smiles plays on her beautious Cheek,
She dreams not of Deceits but credence yields
To outward show.

Mr.KEMBLE (John Philip Kemble)

Argus. - I know him well.
One from'd to grace Religion's Throne. A Man
Of aspect stern; of manners that befit
The priestly Garb.- There's a something in him,
Savours of deep cunning.He best enacts
On Life's Stage,Cariali's proud Victor,
Thy sullen Jacques,or th'vengeful Tyrant.
I've known the time,and many too there are
Have thought the Counterfeit scrowll put on,
That it did seem the Minds's Mind bore part.
In that he did enact.- But soft awhile,
Let's steal away,that we may unobserved
Take heedful note of his seemings.
Mark ye,he knows,and marks with fairest Show
The Gloom that lower'd on his sullen Brow.
The Page is open'd,and his Eye,
Like light'ning glances o'er the fraudful Scroll,
He lends an Ear.while with emphatic voice.
The Legend is proclaimed. Mute he listens,
-Now the Reader pauses

And his Opinion grows. Still he's silent, And
And suit is further press'd,- List: he answers
"No I did but dream." he bids the Host Good Morn
And so retires.

'ORACLE' Oct. 29th. 1790.

No. 4.

Mr. Stevens, (Geo. Stevens). Sir Frederick Eden (Sir Fred.k Eden)

Stevens. Come hither, Audrey. come hither Fred.- Wench; Nay closer yet. Now ~~tell Stevens~~- tell me Audret what sort of a Man could'st thou love.

Audrey Lord, O ! love !

Stevens Yes, thou Audrey.

Audrey And must I tell thee ?

Stevens Yes, to't with a stout heart, thou hast a rare conception, Audrey

Audrey Why then as I must speak Truth, I'd fain have Thy fellow,

Stevens O ! monstrous desire ! Beware Audrey for thy wishes are greater than the Gods will grant. Heaven rains not such Men now-a-day.

Audrey How con'st thou amongst us then ?

Stevens I am, as there a Constellation of Wit; the Phenomenon of the Age, a Comet that attracts public admiration

Audrey Mass ! a Comet said'st thou ? why your Comet hath a fiery Tail !

Stxvxns Yea he is somewhat luminous i' the Peep,he is yourMirror Comet.The Fire is i' the Head of me, I am therefore a Comet-Major, Now hark ye,Audrey, your word 'Fool'hath three significations,there is your Fool - Absolute,your Fool by proxy,and your true Fool. Your Fool absolute hath his commencement i' the Cradle,and ending in the Grave; for being born brainless,he dies your Fool absolute. Your Fool by Proxy,is your pilfering Knave,one that sucks the Brains of others and by constant ~~re~~ retailing Conceits,himself ster'd with Wit. Now your true Fool is the quintessence of Wisdom. Look up sweet Audrey,I am your true Fool.

Audrey And art thou truely he,Master Stevy ?

Stxvxns Aye -Wench,as sure as thou art not. Hist,hist,who comes this way ? Marry 'tis one of the Court,now mark ye Audrey; in me your true Fool is illustrated; you shall now behold your Fool by Proxy.

Enter Sir Fredxxxck Edxn musing

Stxvxns How doth your honour's Head ?

Fred. My Brain's perplexed,I'm wonder-struck.But how fares it with the Fool? ~~as with the Courtier~~

Stxvxns As with the Courtier.

Fred Aye,Marry,and how so ?

Stxvxns As thus;I am perplexed to think where lies the Courtiers ~~Brains, and wond-rstruck that those~~

.Brains,and wonderstruck that thou shouldst possess any.

Fred. For what hon dost take me ?

Stxvxns For that thou art

Fred. And what is that ?

Stxvxns A Courtier

Fred. Fool ! hast then beheld the wonder of the Age ?

Stxvxns Courtier,thou see'st it now,and I beheld its Reflection in every clear Stream

Fred. That wonder mean'st thou ?

Stxvxns Myself

Fred. Art thou a wonder ?

Stxvxns Yea,I am a true Fool.

Fred. Then the World abounds with wonders

Stxvxns It is stock'd with such as thee.

Fred. If as thou say'st the Courtiers lack Brains, he is a Fool,therefore thy equal.

Stxvxns True thou art a Fool,but of the Cradle Breed,Now what is the wonder which have so bewildered thee ?

Fred. I have seen that which thou wilt ne'er behold, The Shakspeare wonder.~~And thou believ'st it ?~~

Stxvxns And thou belirv'st it ?

Fred. As truly as I believe thee a Fool.

Stxvxns I could have sworn it,for 'tis a wonder well worth thy notice.

Fred. All thy knavish wisdom will not procure thee admittance. (11)

Stxvxns Trust me, I shall not put my Wits to the trial.

Fred. Thou'st give thy Sconce to view the Treasure.

Stxvxns Granted; for with it I shall ne'er desire the sight.

Fred. The appearance stamps it old.

Stxvxns Yea, Fire hath the power to scorch and there be
Liquids that will rot - But did'st thou peruse
the wondrous Contents ?

Fred. Nay,I could not decyther a Syllable.

Stxvxns Excellent, i' faith.Thou art a rare Comet,
thy Wit indeed blazes i' the Peep of thee.
Farewell ,sweet Sir,come along Audrey,come
along Wench.
(EXEUNT)

Fred. Why doth the Fool ungird his Wits and taunt me ~~thus~~?
thus ? am I not of the Court,a learned Knight,
one skilled in Tongues and seenly behaviour;
cannot I judge between what is and is not ?
Tush wherefor did I listen to you crazy Jester ?
It is a Treasure,aye,and a matchless one.-
Faith now I think on't,I'll home and set my
Brain to work.I'll scribble thick Folios shall
amaze the Court,Yes, confound the Multitude,
and then sen confus'd,the hell dock'd Fool
shall say,whether my Wits be foolish,yea or nay.
(Exit running)

ORACLE Oct.31st. 1799.

No. 5.

Dr.Pxrr and Dr.Wxrxon (Parr & Warton)

What Men are these ?who foremost of the Throng
With stately port advance. Sure I know them.
Why,yes,they are two as learned Doctors
As England's Realm o'er boasted - Godly Men,
Religion's Vot'rers,who,like the Shepherd,
Tend their Flocks,and scare with Truths all potent.
The Wolf devouring Hell's Fiend malicious.
Mark how the Lines of eithers Countenance
Betray the Brain scholastic fraught.Each Mind
Boasts kindred with the Greek and Roman Sage;
In either I behold a Homer fam'd,
A Hesiod or Pindar,a Horace too,
Or Virgil or the Roman Cicero,
Renound for Declamation eloquent,
And could I swell my Page,not these alone
But countless Names of grave Philosophers
And Chroneclers whose Labours have preserved
Their Country's Annals.That after Ages,
Each virtuous Act applauding,might attempt
Th' emulation of their glorious Feats .
But wherefor stray I from my purpose thus ?
See how they smile and gaze with wond'ring Eye
Upon each Object in this Chamber fam'd !

View now the massive Key,the Bolts spring back,
Harshly on its Hinges grates the iron Door,
Which over from the prying gaze of Man
The fabricated Treasure hides. Her first
Each Deed with cautious Eye 'hose learned Men
Survey. At length enraptured each exclaims,
'Most genuine,most wonderful !'Anon, ~~grown calmer~~
Grown calmer: When-n fain would see
The lucky Youth who first these Relics found,
Forthwith he enters;when the wond'ring gaze
On him is turned,Abash'd he stands,nor dares
His downcast Eyes upraise.He hears their words
They animate his fear-fraught Soul;and now
With caution he the curning Tale relates,
While'st every wond'ring Gaze appears to vouch
And stamp his Words with evidence.But of all
One was most their admiration: I mean
The Tenets of our Bard. How they admired,
And on the sweet simplicity of style
Profusely lavish Praises. One indeed,
For I have offtimes heard the Words repeated,
Enrapture'd cried - 'The service of our Church
Have ever been admir'd,Our ~~Litany~~ Litany
With Beauties manifold accounds.But here
Here Sir, is a Man who all have distance'd.
Pxrr the Sapient,with look profound - With nod

.Of wond'rous import thus his Mind expressed

'I love sweet Avon's Child.There's sterling Ore

' Mingled with worthless dross.In learning,Sir,

' I am an Epicurean.pursuing

' Merely for idle Sport our Shakspeare's Verse,

' Our Milton's and the rest — 'tis when the Greek

' In rumbling majesty,or Latin chaste,

'Meet my regard,that I can feel inspired.

' Oh Sir ! I'm transported beyond myself.

'With mighty Ajax when I scour the Field,

'Hand to Hand meet th' Eagle-crested Hector,

' But to Achilles charged,I Priam's Son

'Defeat;and girded round with Ajax Belt

'Leash him to my Chariot Wheel.-

'Chamelian like,I meet the Form assuming

'Ill-fated Ulysses,- but my Passions pant

'Like Priam's Ghost,I can o'er ruined Troy

' Shed Tears of Blood,-'

Silent did Wxtxn sit,while this his Friend

Proclaimed his likings.But though he spoke not,

Yet did he from his Soul the Cheat believe .

At length they rose with admiration fraught,

And quitted the courteous Owner of the Store,

The wondering Youth,filled with rapturous glow.

To find his great attempt thus praised,- heedless

Pursued his Course,nor once of Danger dreamt,

.Till in the dark Abyss too deeply plunged
He strove the Shore to gain,But vain th' attempt
He sunk,the thoughtless Fool of Vanity.

ORACLE. Nov. 2nd.1799.

No. 6.

Mr.Oxical.

Soft ! who comes this way ?
Sure mine Eyes are not deceived - No 'tis he,
I'll not mar my speech,nor with sugar'd Tongue
Make Corruption sweet.No,let the Lash gall,
For well his Papers merit such re ake;
He's sick in Reputation - One that lolls ~~in Beauty's lap~~
In Beauty's Lap,and basks the live-long Day
In Pleasure's gaudy Sunshine -
Alas ! the hour that such degenerate Seed
Should spring from wholesome Stock.I knew his Sire,
A Man most excellent in's Qualities,
And stor'd with Brain prolific. His Offspring
This witless Wand'rer round the forked Mount,
Possessing written Relics of his Sire,
Connects than to's purpose;and thinks to ape
The worthy parent long defunct,- But no
His Manners are too gross,his Life too free,
To stamp him Genius fraught -Besides he pluck'd
Forth from Nature's Garden a dainty Fruit,

And for a Season were it next his Heart;
But satiate grown, loathing cast it from him,
And took a Weed luxurious to his Arms.
But Love ceases, and with him, the Partner
Of's sweet dalliance. -

(Enter Mr. Oxlxan intoxicated, and Mrs. Gxoxs Cxlxan)
(Mr. & Mrs. Sotham)

Cxlxan. I tell thee, Wench, thy Name is Doll, Dame Tearsheet.- Here my Companions here, they'd vouch for me that thou art Doll - Thy where's Paunch, wheres Sir John, where's Poins and Bardolph,- Sirrahs; I say come forth, and see how I will kiss my Doll.

Gxoxs. I am no Tearsheet, I am no Doll. I am as worthy a Woman as any in the Cheap.

Cxlxan. Ah thou'rt an excellent Wench, for thy breeding hath taught thee to bear with me. And such meet Company for me. A plague on 'em, I hate your frosty Dames, your ice-tongued Maids; give me the sprightly Breed; Give me, I say, my Doll.

Gxoxs. Hold awhile, you have forgot, you must to the Place appointed; and there decide upon the new-found Treasure.

Cxlxan. Peace, Wench I will not thither. Why they prate about this musty Store as if the Writer were a God. And thou knowest well enough, I can outrun this vaunted Bard. Why there's not a Word in me that savours of Morality, my Minds prolific, I am Nature's

. Child nor deign to think like other Men.

Gxoxs. Troth,George,'tis not thought so,would'st thou believe it ?

Cxlxan. Believe what ?

Gxoxs. Why 'tis said that thou can'st meddle with Will Shakspeare as well as the rest.

Cxlxan. They lie,Doll;yea,and to their Teeth,I'll tell them so: 'sblood,must a Man of Wit be ever made the taunt of Fools.

Gxoxs. Aye,and I was told,that one o'erlooking thy works,op'd the Page of Shakspeare and exclaimed "A Thief by Heavens, Stop Thief",upon the which I vented Tears of bitter Rage; and said my George was not a Thief, but a right honest Penman.Yea,and he that loved his Dolly truly,and dost not love me now.

Cxlxan. I love thee sure as I do my Bottle of Sack,the one glads my Heart by Day,the other by Night. Is't not so my Girl ?

Gzbzs. Tush ! no more o' this.Indeed thou'lt make me blush.

Cxlxan. Then must Bardolph be by; for the reflection of his Firebrand could alone work such a Wonder.

Gxbxs. But wilt thou to the Norfolk Mansion ?

Cxlxan. No,not I, a Fig for it,I say I'll not budge. Were there a lewd Ballad indeed,or bawling in't,why then I'd thither,Aye,and Sir John too,and thou my Chuck, should'st along with me,but as it is I'll none of it.

.x So come along Wench,lets in, the lazy Rogues will soon be with me.

(Exunt)

Mrs.Oxlxan.

See where dejectedly she wends her way
Her colourless Cheek,deck'd with gummy Dew !
Thus have I oft beheld the Lily waving:
When some rude Passer-by had snapp'd its Stalk,
Leaving it to pine and die:- Lock her Breast
Heaves as it would burst - Mark that silent Tear !
It hath its source in Men's ingratitude,
Fair one,O pity thee, O may the Page,
Though false,afford thee Pleasure.Soft her look
Assumes serenity,pleas'd she beholds
And eager listens.Now her plaintive Voice
Proclaims her thoughts. Why so she is deceived.
May she again ne'er feel Deception's Tooth,
But lull her Sorrows in forgetfulness.

ORACLE Nov.6th.1799.

IMITATIONS

Enter Sir John Laxdx (Lade) and Tommy Onslxw (Onslow)

Sir John.The fleetest Hounds I dare be sworn
That e'er yet coursed the nimble Stag,
Would not outvie in swiftness my roan Steed.'Tis
a Beast,Sir,high in Mettle,Steady in's Paces,
Sound in all its Points; nay and so sure of Foot,

.. that I would back the Horse myself and scour full speed even on the frowning Precipice that bend's o'er Dover's peobled Beach. I'd leap him o'er the deep-dug Trench and clear the opposing Barrier. What Horse can do my Roan shall dare.

Onslxw. Marry, an he be so good a Beast, I should marvelously like to bestride him, out then methinks t'would seem as if a Sparrow perch'd upon his Back; for I'm named you know the little Tommy !

Sir John. Why verily when thou assum'st the Seat of Charioteer, thy Port hath little Majesty in't. I've offtimes likened thee to a Flea on Bardolph's Nose, or a Button on the Vest of a fat Aldermen. Thou art most truly of the Pigmy Breed.

Onslxw. Beshrew me but I like your Conceit passing well, though it is not of the most mannerly.

Sir John. Well, no matter, we of the Turf, know you sauce not our Phrases like those of the Court, but whither wend you ?

Onslxw. I am for the public Ride with all convenient speed.

Sir John. And I shall hie me to the Shakspeare Treasures; perchance some Lines may vaunt the Rider's powers, or praise the skilful Charioteer.

Onslxw. Most regally judged; and now I think on't I'll

I'll thither with you faith, and what say you ?

Sir John. We'll bet upon our Beasts.

Onslxw. I'll take you what you list, that I from hence to Master Ireland's before you.

Sir John. Agreed, there's forty Marks upon my Bays.

Onslxw. Come let us away, I long to assay this feat, Oh ! how it delights me to see the Rabble with vacant stare follow the rattle from Chariot Wheels.

Sir John. I attend.

(Exeunt)

How eagerly they mount their lofty Seats,
Each the Rein assumed, and waves the ample Lash;

Now the Signals given - The Steeds impetuous
Foaming grind the polished Bit -so they start,
And like a Whirlwind scour along the Way.
The bowling Wheels in rattling clangour move:
Chariots give room, and the gaping Multitude,
Astonished eye those mad Knights of the Whip.
Now Onslxw gains, and now by the Red's length
Lxdx outstripts him. Now Beast to Beast they turn,
Each the Mansion views, and each his Courser
Forward urges with redoubled fury,
They sure the Rein, and 'fore the Portal halt.
Neither the Conquer'd nor the Conqueror.
The Bets are doubled and it is agreed
The Race at fitting opportunity

Should be again rehearsed. At length they gain
The studious Closet fam'd. Anon the Door
Flies open to receive them. They enter,
And scarce have Salutations passed when lo
Stxckpxl appears who likewise comes to view
The musty Relicks.—Now they are produced
And surely three more sapient Gentlemen
Ne'er gazed upon the full orb'd Moon – Lxdx first
His Judgment thus expressed –

Lxdx. I swear by Epsom, Onslxw there's withery in't; ~~were~~ I were I not otherwise assur'd I would have vouch'd th that they had strew'd the Sheets in filthy 'bacco, they smell like any Hostler's Taproom i' the Cheap.

Onslxw. Mass, and so they do, and now I bethink me the odour of these same Relicks is like the Coat of Barbarry, my old Chesnut Mare; but the scent to my Mind savours more of fireing the Fetlock. What sayest thou Stxckpxt.?

Stxckpxt. Barring the greasy Unction that will sweat through in the dressing, I should rather liken then to the Paper that enfolds a Chop a la Maintenon, which is ever scorched thus.

(Onslxw addressing Mr. Ireland.)

Onslxw. Kind Sir, is there aught contain'd in this all wond'rous Store that touches on my Art ?

Sir John. Or mine ?

Stxekpxl. Or is there the History of a boisterous Tavern Feast ? I hate your sounding Phrases, your touching lays of Love and Charity: give me a Dinner and my Cup of sugar't Sack.

Ireland sen'r. Gentle Sirs, I fear these Presents do but ill accord with your several Desires. First, Master Onslxw, the Bard was not of the Jockey Crewe, that he rode passing well, I grant ye, but his Heaven was on a Pegasus, a Steed unknown to ye all. He could drive too, excellently well, Sir John; but his was the Apollinian Chariot, and his leashed Horses those of the Line. He feasted too at Taverns in the Cheap, good Master Stxekpxt but the Companions of his Revels were your true Touchstones, and no deep drinking; they quoth of rich Draughts from Helicon's clear Brook, and did not swallow Bumpers of Sack and Rhenish, they were godly Yeoman too that always paid their Costs, and would not gorge at another's charge. Thus methinks, you have missed the Mark, and wasted Time, which were moreprociously employed i' the public Ride and Haunts of boisterous Revelry.

Sir John, Marry, an I think so too; you judge aright, Sir, Men are fickle, and sometime prone to waver in Opinion. Therefor I take my leave.

Stxokpxt. And I come along Tommy, we'kl to the Bear's Head, I long to have the Feast at my Cost, we shall meet a merry Crew, trust me.

Onslxw. Master Ireland, I humbly press your Hand.

Ireland. Gentles all, farewell.

(Exeunt)

No. 8. In the course of a Day or two — An Hundred Numbers are already prepared containing the Opinions of the most distinguised public Characters of the Shakspeare MSS.

Oracle Newspaper Aug 15th 1799

Shakesperean Hunt

Aid me my muse, for I would tell of things
Surpassing all that's mortal: of wonders
That were they not fresh in our remembrances,
Might be deemed delusion fiction's offspring.
Oh! that my quill were pluck'd from fancy's wing,
Then should I pen my tale in glowing phrase,
For such it merits. 'Tis wonder's offspring,
And fancy shou'd the wond'rous theme record;
I am but earthly, that must plead excuse,
If lack of frenzy's language shall be found
In this my strange narrative. I possess
Such knowledge of the fact as none can boast,
Save him who wrought the action. He will know
If truth or falsehood stain my chronicle.
Be he for ever dumb if I speak foir;
If foul-mouth'd he my story'd page should blot,
Let him the truth proclaim, and stamp me base;
For ever hold me up to public scorn,

That I may bear a lear's hoteful name.
Against the briny flood proud albion's cliffs
Majestic shew their frunts. In attitude
Aspiring to the azure-vaulted roof,
Star fretted. Its sides of snow complexion
As the adamant indissoluble,
Badly withstand the surges dread attacks,
And fix'd immutable defy the shock
Of mould'ring time and wasting elements.
Upon this Isle renown'd London spreads
Her form magnificent, where liberty,
Enchanting Goddess, sits enthron'd and smiles
To see her darling children's happiness,
Hard by the bank of silvery Thames, where once
A stately palace of the Norfolk's stood,
Enacted was my theme's reality.
Long was the Mansion famed for its contents.
The walls with rarest works of art were grac'd;
Each chamber boasted some antiquity,
Vouch'd genuine by sages of experience,
Yet one in beauty far excell'd the rest.
A study amply deck'd with choicest works
Of British authors fam'd, there might be seen

Of Chaucer, Gower, and St. Edmund's Monk
Of Spencer, Shakspeare, and a hundred more
Editions rare. 'Twas there you might behold
The wrought apparel of renowned Sydney,
The bead-strung tassels of the martyr'd Charles,
and blood-stain'd Cromwell's coat. The sculptur'd chair
Where Shakspear oft have sat, while on his knee,
With glowing cheek upon his heart recline'd,
The lovely Anna heard his talk of love.
There your eye would gaze on casements lofty
Whose Gothic forms were richly stai'd with glass
Of varied dyes diffusing wide around
The Rainbow's tints, a gleam monastical.
Besides its Lord within this mansion dwelt
Two Maids, his daughters, and a Matron sage;
The soul of one to music was allied,
The pencil grac'd the second's hand; the third
Claim'd kindred with the fire-brained God whose
In tripping measures flow. Yet one there was
Beneath this roof, of whom I most would speak,
The last-born of this Family. A youth,
Of whom report have spread a thousand tales
Most to dispraise, few to commend his name

(To be Continued) 3

№ II

In early days, the converse of his Sire
Was won't to please his Fancy. With delight
He listen'd to the lays of ancient times;
Read o'er and o'er old Legendary Tales,
And Ballads that recorded val'rous deeds
Of English Hero's bold. At length, the Fate
Of hapless Chatterton assail'd his ear;
Oft he ponder'd o'er th' unhappy record,
Yet would have gladly shar'd his luckless end
To be the partner of his Fame renown'd.
Thus time elaps'd, till the revolving years
Had Eighteen Summers told. 'Twas then the youth,
With vanity inspir'd first dar'd assay
His lofty purpose. Like the unthinking Boy
Whose hand untutor'd wou'd the rein assume
Of Phebus mettled coursers. So he strive ~~to~~
To drive the Chariot of our English Sun
And bear his Godlike Name. Th' attempt was bold;
But, like Appolo's Sun, he aim'd too high,
And, from the lofty seat was headlong hurl'd
By thunders launch'd from direful Critic's hand.—
But, hold! Now to rehearse the vary'd themes

His brain assay'd. Humbly at first he strove
A Signature to pen. The cheat prevailed;
For most who saw the Fiction credited,
Fame's Trump their widely spread that wond'rous Tale;
Twas soon the Public converse; naught was heard
But Shakspear's name rever'd. Thus accomplish'd
The primal purpose, his ~~prom~~ procreant brain
Attempted next the Stile to imitate —
When the Religious Tenets of our Bard
In meekest Strains appear'd. This was receiv'd
And by the World admir'd, Our Shakspeare's note,
And the receipt, by Heminge penn'd came next
To strike with wonder: For Bills of Promise
A custom had been deem'd of modern date:
Yet this was overlook'd, so prone is man
To credit wonders which he'd fain believe.
A late traditionary next was wrech'd,
The whimsical Conceit to Cowley sent —
The Letter of Elizabeth renown'd —
And various matters of less import, each
At seperate times, and not in mass produc'd,
Were genuine esteem'd. The ~~altered~~ alter'd Lear;
The silken-twisted Lock to Anna sent —

6

Relic inestimable struck wonder
In the Multitude. Some indeed, there were
at first Believers, who at sight of this
Shrank back in doubt. Still unappall'd the youth
Boldly dar'd adventure. And Vortigern
At length appear'd – But more of this anon,
Countless Receipts, and after lapse of time,
The annals of our Second Henry Jam'd,
And peerless Rosamond still multipl'd
Th' advent'rous Fabrication. —
Of this enough, 'Tis fit I now rehearse
Th' Opinions vary'd of the numberless
Who saw the Fiction. — The Mansion's Open,
When straight appears the Master of the whole,
Who rises, and, with free and courteous mien,
Each Stranger greets. Then most eloquently
The forged Tale relates; after the which,
Forth from the massive Chest, his treasure draws
And offers it to public view. —
No. III. To-morrow or next day, containing the
Opinions respecting the Shakspearean MSS.
Lord Mxlgrxve Miss Wxllxs (now Mrs.
Col. Thxpps Cxmpbxl
Mr. Kxmblx, and (6)

№ 3.

Lord Mulgrave

Here's one of courteous mien, a Gentleman
Of noble bearing, whose upright conduct
Hath ever warded him from envy's shaft
I love him, he shows something like to those
O' the olden time. He is not custom's slave
Nor doth the title in him mar the man.
But soft – he came to view the public theme;
He loves the Bard, and therefore is prepar'd
To credit what he wishes were most true.
His eager transports blind his better sense;
He sees the fire-scench'd lines, the mouldering sheets,
Nor for a moment doubts. – Thus to the chain
Another link is added. – The current
'Gins to swell; and th' enthusiastic crowd
Press forward. – Why e'en let them come! – At best,
Man's life is a mere farce; and this but adds
One to the many changeful senses.

Col – C. Phxpps.

His breeding, Sir, hath been to arms. He loves
His God and Country, and he's liegeman sworn

Unto our Sovereign Lord the King. — 'Tis said
He likes the bustle of a Camp. No sound
More welcome to's ear, than the harsh thunder
From th' Cannon's belching mouth. — He's forward
In's country's cause, yet when the iron hand
Of blood-stain'd war is scarf'd in gentle peace,
'Tis then his nature changes. He becomes
Docile as the lamb, and, in beauty's lap,
Is lull'd to sweet repose. —
He's one who yielded to the longing itch
Of curiosity. —
He saw, was pleas'd and credited

Miss W-ll-s now Mrs Cx mpbx

Mark ye the lovely maid. — lightsome her step,
As dew brushing Fairies, or Zephyr's breath,
That scarcely ~~was~~ waves the bladed grass. Her form
Shows all of heav'n that e'er did mortal grace.
The modest blush plays on her dimpled cheek,
Like th' expanded rose waving amidst the lillies,
Observe her eye, like Dian's radiance
Beaming on the snow-deck'd earth. Her motions
Negligently elegant; her manner

hath a bewitching something in't that wins
The wond'ring gazer. Yet these perfections
Taint not her mind with pride. She's mild as heav'n
When th' early May - nearer been heavens earth. -
Yet hold! - She gazes on the opurious bulk:
Now dimpled smiles plays on her beauteous cheek.
She dreams not of deceits but credence yields
To outward show.

Mr. K x bl x.

Argus. — I know him well.
One fram'd to grace Religion's throne. A man
Of aspect stern; of manners that befit
The priestly garb. - There's a something in him,
Savours of deep cunning. He best enacts
On life's stage, Coriolis's proud victor,
The sullen Jaques, or th' vengeful tyrant.
I've known the time, and many too there are
Have thought the counterfeit so well put on,
That it did seem the mimic's mind bore part,
In that he did enact. - But soft awhile,
Let's steal away, that we may unobserv'd
Take heedful note of his seemings.
Mark ye, he bows, and masks with fairest show

The gloom that lower'd on his sullen brow,
The page is open'd, and his eye,
Like lightening glances o'er the fraudful scroll,
He lend an ear, while, with emphatic voice,
The legend is proclaim'd. Mute he listens,
Now the reader pauses,
and his opinion craves, - Still he's silent,
and suit is further press'd - "List"; he answers
No, I did but dream. - he bids the host good morn
and so retires.

Oracle. Oct 29' 1799

No 4

Mr. Stxvxns, Sr. Fredxvxk Edxn.

Stxvxns. Come hither, Audrey; come hither wench;
Nay, closer yet, Now tell me, Audrey, what sort of a
Man could'st thou love.

Audrey. Lord, O love!

Stxvxns. Yea, thou, Audrey.

Audrey. And must I tell thee?

Stxvxns Yea, to't with a stout heart, thou
has a rare conception, Audrey.

Audrey. Why then, an I must speak ~~truth~~ truth,
I'de fain Have thy fellow

Stxuxns. O! monstrous desire! Beware Audrey for
~~for~~ Thy wishes are greater than the
Gods will grant.
Heaven ~~rained~~ rains not such men
now-a day

Audrey. How com'st thou amongst us then?

Stxuxns I am, as'twere, a constellation of wit;
the Phenomenon o' the age, a comet
that attracts Public admiration.

Audrey Mass! a comet, said st thou?.
Why your Comet hath a fiery tail?

Stxuxns Yea he is somewhat luminous i' the
poop, He is your mirror comet. The
fire is i' the head
Of me, I am therefore a comet-major.
Now hark ye, Audrey, your word Fool
hath three significations, there is your
Fool absolute, your Fool by proxy, and
your true Fool. Your Fool absolute
hath his commencement i' the cradle,
and ending in the grave; for being
born brainless, he dies your Fool absolute.

Your Fool by proxy, Is your pilfering knave, one that sucks the Brains of others, and by constant retailing conceits Himself stoi'd with wit, Now your true Fool Is the quintessence of wisdom. Look up, sweet Audrey. I am your true Fool.

Audrey — and art thou truly he, Master Stevy?

Stxuxns — Aye-wench, as sure as thou art not. Hist, hist, who comes this way? Marry 'tis One o' the Court, now, mark ye Audrey; In me your true Fool is illustrated; You shall now behold your Fool by proxy.

Enter S-r Fredxrxck Edxn, musing.

Stxuxns — How does your honour's head?

Fred — My brain's perplexed, I'm wondérstruck. But how goes it with thee Fool?

Stxuxns — As with the Courtier.

Fred. — Aye, marry, and how so?

Stxuxns — As thus; I am perplex'd to think where lies The Courtier's brains, and wonderstruck that there should'st possess any.

Fred — For what, then, dost take me?
Stxuxns — For that thou art.
Fred — And what is that?
Stxuxns — A Courtier
Fred — Fool! hast then beheld the wonder of the age?
Stxuxns — Courtier, thou see'st it now, and I behold its Reflection in every clear stream
Fred — What wonder mean'st thou?
Stxuxns — Myself.
Fred. Art thou a wonder?
Stxuxns — Yea, I am a true fool.
Fred. — Then the world abounds with wonders
Stxuxns — It is stock'd with such as thee.
Fred. — If as thou say'st the Courtier's lack brains He is a fool, therefore they equal.
Stxuxns. — True thou art a fool, but of the cradle breed. Now what is the wonder which hath so Bewildered thee?
Fred — I have seen that which thou wilt ne'er behold, The Shakspear wonder

Stxuxns — And there believ'st it?

Fred — As truly as I believe thee a fool

Stxuxns — I could have sworn it, for 'tis a wonder well worth thy notice.

Fred — All thy knavish wisdom will not procure thee admittance

Stxuxns — Trust me, I shall not put my wits to the trial.

Fred — Thou'st give thy sconce to view the treasure

Stxuxns — Granted; for with it I shall ne'er desire the sight.

Fred — The appearance stamps it old.

Stxuxns — Yea, fire hath the power to scorch & these be liquids that will rot — But did'st thou peruse the wondrous contents?

Fred — Nay, I could not decipher a syllable.

Stxuxns — Excellent, i' faith. Thou art a rare comet, thy wit, indeed, blazes i the poop of thee. Farewell, sweet sir, come along, Audrey, come along wench.

(Exeunt)

Fred — Why doth the fool unguid his wits and taunt me thus? Am I not of the court,

A learned knight, one skilled in tongues,
And seemly haviour; cannot I judge between
What is
And is not? Tush, wherefore did I listen to you
Crazy Jester? – It is a treasure, aye, and a
Matchless one! – Faith, now I think on't,
I'll home and set my brain to work. I'll
Scribble thick folios shall amaze the Court,
Yea, confound the multitude,
And then ~~confess~~ confus'd, ~~the~~ hell deck'd
fool shall say
Whether my wits be foolish, yea or nay.
(Exit running)

<u>Oracle Oct. 31st 1799.</u>

No. 5

Dr. Parr, and Dr. Warton.

What men are these, who foremost of the throng
With stately port advance. Sure I know them.
Why, yes, they are two as learned Doctors
As England's Realm e'er boasted – Godly men,
Religion's vot'rers, who, like the Shepherd,
Tend their flocks, and scare with truths all potent,
The wolf-devouring hell's fiend malicious.
Mark how the lines of either's countenance

Betray the brain scholastick fraught. Each
mind
Boasts kindred with the Greek & Roman Sage;
In either I behold a Homer fam'd,
A Hesiod, or Pindar, a Horace too,
Or Virgil, and the Roman Cicero,
Renown'd for declamation eloquent.
And could I swell my page, not these alone
But countless names of grave philosophers
And ~~chron~~ Chronicles whose labours have preserved
Their Countries annals. That after ages,
Each virtuous act applauding, might attempt
Th' emulation of their glorious feats.
But wherefore stay I from my purpose thus?
See ~~I'll~~ how ~~they~~ smile and gaze with wond'ring eye
Upon each object in this chamber fam'd!
View now the massive key, the bolts flying back,
Harshly on its hinges grates the iron door,
Which ever from the prying gaze of man
The fabricated treasure hides. Now first
Each deed with cautious eye ~~the~~ learned men
Survey. At length enrapture'd each exclaims,
"Most genuine, most wonderful! Anon,

Grown calmer: Wh x r – n Jain would see
The lucky youth who first these relics found
Forthwith he enters; when the wond'ring gaze
On him is turn'd, abash'd he stands, nor dares
His downcast eyes upraise. He hears their words
They animate his fear-fraught soul; and now
With caution he the cunning tale relates,
Whilst ev'ry mould'ring scrap appears to vouch
And stamp his words with evidence. But of all
One was most their admiration: I mean
The Tenets of our Bard. How they admir'd,
and on the sweet simplicity of style
Profusely lavish praises. One indeed,
For I have oftimes heard the words repeated,
Enraptur'd cried – "The Service of our Church
Hath ever been admir'd. Our Litany
With beauties manifold abounds. But here
Here Sir, is a man who all have distan'd
P x rr, the sapient, with look profound – With nod
Of wond'rous import – thus his mind express'd
I love sweet Avon's child. There's sterling ore
Mingled with worthless dross. In learning, Sir,
I am an Epicurean, ~~pursing~~ pursuing

Merely for idle sport our Shakspear's verse,
Our Milton's, and the rest - 'Tis when the Greek
In numbers majesty, or Laten chaste,
Meet my regard, that I can feel inspir'd.
Oh Sir! I'm transported beyond myself,
With mighty Ajax when I scour the field,
Hand to hand meet th' eagle-crested Hector,
Bet to Achilles charg'd, I Priam's son
Defeat; and girded round with Ajax belt
Leash him to my chariot wheel. —
Chamelion like, I next the form assuming
ill fam'd Ulysses.— But my passions pant
Like Priam's ghost, I can, o'er ruin'd Troy
Shed tears of blood. —
Silent did Wxtxn sit, whil this his friend
Proclaim'd his likings. But though he spoke not,
Yet did he from his soul the cheat believe.
at length they rose with admiration fraught,
And quitted the courteous owner of the store,
The wond'ring youth, fill'd with rapt'rous glow,
To find his great attempt thus prais'd - heedless
Pursued his course, nor once of danger dreamt,
Till in the dark abyss too deeply plung'd

He strove the shore to gain. But vain th'attempt
He sunk, the thoughtless fool of vanity.

Oracle Nov. 2nd

No 6

Mr. Colman (Colman

Soft! Who comes this way?
Sure mine eyes are not deceiv'd – No 'tis he,
I'll not mar my speech, nor with sugar'd tongue
Make corruption sweet. No, let the lash gall,
For well his papers merit such rebuke;
He's sick in reputation – one that lulls
In Beauty's lap, and basks the live-long day
In pleasure's gaudy sunshine —
alas! the hour that such degenerate seed
Should spring from wholesome stock. I knew
his Sire,
a man most excellent in's qualities,
And stor'd with brain prolific.– His offspring
This witless wand'rer round the forked Mount,
Possessing written relicks of his Sire,
Connects them to his purpose; & thinks to ape
The worthy Parent long defunct.– But no
His manners are too gross, his life too free,

pluck'd
To stamp him genius Draught. - Besides he
Forth from Nature's Garden a dainty fruit,
and for a season wore it next his heart:
But satiate grown, loathing cast it from him,
and took a weed luxurious to his arms.
But love comes; and with him, the partner
Of's sweet dalliance. -
Enter Mr Ex1xan intoxicated, & Mrs.
GxBxs Cx1xan. I tell thee, wench, thy name
is Doll, Dame
Tearsheet. - Were my companions here, they'd
vouch for
me that thou art Doll. - Why where's Paunch,
where's Sir ~~John~~
John, where's Poins and Bardolph: Serrahs; I
say come
Forth, and see how I will kiss my Doll.
GxBxs. - I am no Tearsheet, I am no Doll,
I am as
Worthy a woman as any in the cheap.
Cx1xan. - Ah thou'rt an excellent wench, for
thy breeding have taught thee to bear
with me. And such meet company for me

a plague on 'em, I hate your frosty
dames, your ice tongued maids; give me
the sprightly breed; Give me I say my Doll.

G x b x s - Hold awhile, you have forgot, you must
to the place appointed: and there decide
upon the new-found Treasure.

C x l x an - Peace, wench; I will not thither. Why
They prate about this musty store as if
the Writer were a God
and thou know'st well enough, I can
out-reen this vaunted Bard. Why
there's not a word in me but savours
of morality.
My mind's prolific, I am Nature's Child
nor deign to think like other men.

G x b x s - Troth, George, 'tis not thought so,
would'st thou believ't?

C x l x an - Believe what?

G x b x s - Why 'tis said that thou can'st meddle
with Will Shakspeare as well as the best.

C x l x an - They lie, Doll; yea, and to their teeth
I'll tell them so; 'sblood, must a man
of wit be ever made the tacent of fools

G x B x S — Aye, & I was told, that one o'erlooking thy Works, ope'd the page of Shakspear, and exclaim'd "A Thief, by Heavens, Stop Thief": upon the which I vented tears of bitter rage; & said my George was not a Thief, but a right honest penman. Yea, & ~~me~~ he that loved his Dolly truly, and dost not love me now.

C x L x Sn — I love thee sure as I do my bottle of sack the one glads my heart by day, the other by night. - I'st not so, my Girl?

G x B x S — Tush! no more o this. Indeed, thou'lt make me blush.

C x L x Sn — Then must Bardolph be by; for the reflection of his firebrand could alone work such a wonder.

G x B x S — But wilt thou to the Norfolk Mansion?

C x L x Sn — No, not I, a fig for't, I say I'll not budge. Were there a lewd ballad, indeed-, or bawdry in't, why then I'd thither. Aye, and [illegible], and those, my buck, should'st along with me. But, as it is I'll none on't

So come along, wench let's in;
The lazy rogues will soon be with me.
(Exeunt)

Mrs. Cxlxon

See where dejectedly she wends her way
Her colourless cheek; deck'd with gummy dew!
Thus have I oft ~~the~~ beheld the lily waving:
When some rude passer by; had snapp'd its stalk,
Leaving it to pine & die:- Look, her breast
Heaves as it wou'd burst. - Mark that silent tear!
It hath its source in man's ingratitude.
Fair one, O pity thee. O ~~th~~ may the page,
Though false, afford the pleasure. Soft, her look,
Assumes serenity, pleas'd she beholds
And eager listens. - Now her plaintive voice
Proclaims her thoughts. - Why so she is deceiv'd.
May she again ne'er feel deception's tooth,
But lull her sorrows in forgetfulness.
Oracle. Nov. 6th 1799

No VII Oracle Nov 11th 1799.

Imitations

Enter Sir Jxhn Lxdx and Txmmy Onslxw.

Sir John. – The fleetest hounds, I dare be sworn that e'er yet ~~cursed~~ cours'd the nimble Stag, would not outrive in swiftness my roan Steed. 'Tis a beast, Sir, high in mettle. Steady in's paces, sound in all its points; nay, & so sure of foot, that I would back the horse myself, and scour full speed even on the frowning precipice that bend's o'er Dover's pebbled beach. I'd leap him o'er the deep-dug trench, and clear the opposing barrier. What horse can do, my Roan shall dare.

Onslow – Marry, an he be so good a beast, I should marvelously like to bestride him; but then methinks 'twould seem as if a sparrow perch'd upon his back; for I'm nam'd you know, the little Johnny.

Sir John – Why, verily; when thou assum'st the seat of Charioteer, they port hath little majesty in't. I've oftimes likened thee to a flea on Bardolph's nose, or a button on the vest of a fat Alderman. Thou art most truly

of the pigmy breed.

Onslxw — Beshrew me but I like your conceit passing well, though it is not of the most mannerly.

Sir Jxhn — Well, no matter, we of the turf, know you sauce not our phrases like those o' the Court. But whither wend you?

Onslxw — I am for the public ride with all convenient speed.

Sir Jxhn — And I shall hie me to the Shakspear Treasure; perchance some lenes may vaunt the rider's prowess, or praise the skilful charioteer.

Onslxw — Most regally Judg'd; & now I think on't I'll thither with you Faith, and what say you, ~~Sir~~

Sir Jxhn — We'll bet upon our beasts, I'll take you what you list, that I from hence to Master Ireland's before you.

Sir Jxhn — Agreed; there's forty marks upon my bays

Onslxw — Come let us away, I long to assay this feat, Oh! how it delights me to see the rabble with vacant stare follow the

rattle from chariot wheels
Sir John - I attend.
(Exeunt.)

How eagerly they mount their loft seat,
Each the rein assumed, and waves the ample lash:
Now the signals given - The steeds impetuous
Foaming grind the polish'd bit - So they start,
And like a whirlwind scour along the way.
The bowling wheels in rattling clangor move;
Chariots give room, and the gaping multitude,
Astonish'd eye these mad Knights of the Whip.
Now Ansl×w gains; & now by the rod's length
L×d× outstrips him. Now beast to beast they turn,
Lash the Mansion views, & each his courser
Forward urges with redoubled fury;
They curb the rein, and 'fore the portal halt,
Neither the conquer'd nor the conqueror.
The bets are doubled & it is agreed
The race at fitting opportunity
Should be again rehears'd. At length they gain
The studious closet Jam'd. Anon the door
Flies open to receive them. They enter,
And scarce have salutations pass'd when lo

Stxckpxl appears, who likewise comes to view
The musty relics. — Now they are produc'd,
And surely three more sapient Gentlemen
Ne'er gazed upon the full orb'd moon — Lxdx first
His judgment thus express'd —

Lxdx — I swear by Epsom, Onslxw, there's witchery in't; were I not otherwise assur'd I would have vouch'd that they had strew'd the sheets in filthy 'bacco, they smell like any hostler's tap-room i' the cheap.

Onslxw — Mass, & so they do, &, now I bethink me the 'der of these same relics is like the coat of Barbary, my old chestnut mare; but the scent to my mind savours more of fireing the fetlock. What say'st thou, Slxckpxl?

Stxckpxl — Barring the greasy unction that will sweat through in the dressing, I should rather liken them to the paper that enfolds a chop a-la-Maintenon, which is ever scorch'd thus.

Onslxw addressing Mr Irxland

Kind Sir, is there aught contained in this all

mendicus store that touches on my art?

Sir Jxhn – Or mine?

Slxckpxl – Or is there the history of a boisterous tavern feast? I hate your sounding phrases, your touching lays of Love & Charity: give me a dinner, and my cup of sugar'd sack.

Irxlxnd sen. Gentle Sirs, I fear these presents do but ill accord with your several desires. First, Master Onslxw the bard was not 'o the Jockey crew, that he rode passing well, I grant ye, but his heaven was on a Pegasus, a steed unknown to ye all. He could drive, too, excellently well, Sir Jxhn; but his was the Apollonian chariot, & his leash'd horses those of the Lyre. He feasted too at taverns in the Cheap, good Master Slxckpxl but the companions of his revels were your true Touchstones, & no deep drinking: they quaff'd rich drafts from Helicon's clear brook, & did not swallow bumpers of Sack & Rhenish; they were godly yeoman too that always

paid their costs, and would not gorge at another's charge, Thus methinks, ye have miss'd the mark, & wasted time, which were more preciously employed i the public ride & haunts of boisterous revelry.

Sir Jxhn — Marry! an I think so too; you judge aright, Sir; men are fickle, & something prone to waver in opinion. Therefore I take my leave.

Stxckspxl. — And I come along Txmmy, we'll to the Boar's Head; I long to have thee feast at my cost, we shall meet a merry crew, trust me.

Onslxw — Master Jxxnd, I humbly pres you hand

Irxlxnd — Gentles all, farewell.

(Exeunt)

No. VIII In the course of a day or two - an hundred numbers are already prepared containing the opinion of the most distinguished Public Characters of the Shakspear MSS.